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Testimony Before the Labor & Public Employees Committee
March 5, 2015
HB 6784 AN ACT EXPANDING PAID SICK LEAVE

The Connecticut Restaurant Association represents over 600 restaurants and affiliated businesses across the state. Our members range from quick serve to casual to fine dining establishments. The Connecticut hospitality industry employs an estimated 145,000 people, making up 9% of our states' workforce. Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy and generate tremendous tax revenue.

The CRA opposes HB 6784, An Act Expanding Paid Sick Leave.

In 2011, Connecticut was the first state to pass a mandatory paid sick leave law. Four years later, just a few states have followed suit. Our neighboring state of Massachusetts did so in the fall of 2014 on a ballot initiative after six failed attempts in the legislature. There are several reasons mandatory paid sick leave isn't law in a majority, or even many state across the country. Connecticut should not expand the current law.

- A one size fits all policy does not work. The restaurant industry is different from other industries. We are in a "right now" business where if an employee calls in sick, they need to be replaced immediately, therefore requiring the employer to double pay for that shift. This applies regardless of the size of the restaurant.
- Contrary to what was promised by the proponents, paid sick leave has not reduced employee illness or turnover.
- Expanding this law to employers with ten employees will directly impact some of the smallest, family run restaurants. It will absolutely result in additional costs.
- Many restaurant employers already impacted by paid sick leave have reduced their workforce or cut bussers from the staff entirely in order to pay for the cost of paid sick leave. Imposing this mandate on small businesses will undoubtedly have the same impact.
- Costly mandates only inhibit growth in the restaurant industry.